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SENSITIVE
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FROM AMBASSADOR SHANNON FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL HOLDER
STATE FOR WHA, WHA/BSC, USOAS

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SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR THE FEBRUARY 23-26 VISIT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC HOLDER TO BRAZIL

¶1. (SBU) I want to warmly welcome you to Brazil for your visit to Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia, and to attend the 8th Meeting of Justice Ministers of the Americas (REMJA). The Government of Brazil (GOB) is enthusiastic that you have decided to attend the REMJA, and you will be eagerly received at your Brazil-specific meetings. Within the broader bilateral relationship, justice and law enforcement issues are among those with the greatest potential and where Brazil's growing international clout can be significant as we seek to obtain our objectives in South America, in multilateral organizations, and increasingly in other regions of the world. At the same time, longstanding wariness in some sectors of Brazilian government and society with regard to U.S. dominance, motives, and actions continues to require careful handling as Brazil asserts itself on the global stage, and puts a premium on regular dialogue and sustained relationship-building. Nonetheless, the GOB remains genuinely interested in developing a deeper relationship with the Obama Administration, and your engagement with Brazilian government leaders will provide a significant boost to our efforts to pursue a closer partnership on law enforcement issues.

Brazil's Rapid Ascendancy...

¶2. (SBU) Brazil is changing rapidly. Already one of the world's top-ten economies before the financial crisis, the continuation of solid economic management and better-than-expected performance has brought Brazil out of the crisis earlier than most countries and in a relatively stronger position. In addition to its open and stable economy, Brazil's ascendancy is being driven by solid democratic institutions, a competitive private sector, an ample resource base, and a government intent on reaching beyond Brazil's traditional role as a leader of South America. While continuing to pursue stability among Brazil's ten South American neighbors, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Foreign Minister Celso Amorim have spent seven years aggressively reaching out to Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, as well as taking a prominent role in global trade, climate change, nuclear non-proliferation, and economic discussions. With its increasing global economic and diplomatic prominence, U.S. law enforcement interests in Brazil are also increasing, as the growth in legal trade, travel, communication, and finance in and through Brazil bring with them increased opportunities for criminal exploitation.

...Is Coupled with Emerging Country Problems

¶3. (SBU) Brazil's emergence on the global stage comes even as the country continues to face notable challenges at home, which also touch directly on U.S. law enforcement interests. Some 50 million Brazilians, mostly in the northeast, are among the poorest in Latin America, and the gap between rich and poor is among the highest in the world. Although many jurists are top-flight, Brazil's judicial system is often described as dysfunctional, hobbled by overlapping jurisdictions, lack of training, stultifying bureaucracy, and overwhelming backlogs. Persistent and widespread corruption affects all three branches of government. Enforcement capability suffers from lack of training, bureaucratic rivalries, corruption in some agencies, and police forces too small to cover a country of almost 200 million inhabitants. The slums of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and other major cities often have little government presence, opening them to exploitation by increasingly powerful criminal gangs. Murder rates in many Brazilian cities are ten times those in the most violent U.S. cities, and Brazil now ranks second only to the United States in consumption of cocaine, in addition to being a major transit point for drugs headed to the Europe and the United States.

Successful Cooperation on Law Enforcement...to a Point

¶4. (SBU) USG law enforcement agencies (LEAs) with a presence in Brazil all enjoy a cooperative and active relationship with Brazil's Federal Police (DPF). Over the last several years, we have made a concerted effort to reach beyond traditional contacts

to non-traditional executive branch agencies and non-executive branch partners, including state and municipal governments, legislators, the private sector, and civil society. We have made new inroads with the judiciary and prosecutors, and spearheaded landmark Mission programs aimed at bringing them together with police to address common law enforcement objectives. This outreach has paid dividends in opening new areas of cooperation with eager partners and in increasing the chances of arrests, prosecutions, and convictions in cases important to the United States.

¶5. (SBU) At the same time, our increasing cooperation has been viewed with caution by some political elements of the GOB, who are concerned to maintain an equal partnership between our two countries and protect Brazilian sovereignty. This has had the effect of limiting cooperation to operational levels, and has occasionally placed limitations on cooperation even at those levels. This divide between policy and operational levels has been most noticeable as we seek to help Brazil strengthen its borders against international organized crime; generally good cooperation at an operational level has been offset by a reluctance to engage at a policy level on common threats in South America.

Prospects for Enhanced Policy Cooperation Are Growing

¶6. (SBU) Over the last months, the prospects for deepening our partnership have improved considerably. Brazil is rethinking its security and law enforcement strategies as it prepares to host the soccer World Cup in 2014 in twelve separate venues, and as Rio de Janeiro begins preparations to host the summer Olympic Games in 2016. The worsening situation in Bolivia with respect to drug trafficking has led the GOB to consider ways of working more closely with the United States. And in addition to hosting the REMJA, Brazil will host the once-every-five-years UN Crime Control Conference in April, and has launched a candidate to head the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

¶7. (SBU) Your visit comes as Brazil gets back to business after the Carnival break and before electoral races for the October elections for Brazil's next president, most members of congress, and all state governors begin in earnest this June. Although a new government will take office January 1, 2011, I believe there is ample opportunity to strengthen our collaboration across the full range of security issues that will carry through from this government to the next.

¶8. (SBU) As you meet with Brazilian officials, I believe you will find them eager to increase our ties. Police, prosecutors and

judges all require additional training, and we have been particularly attentive to ways in which we can foster cooperation among the different branches. Prosecutors and judges, in particular, need basic training to help them move toward a more efficient accusatory system, and need specialized training in specific areas of interest to the United States: gangs and organized crime, drugs, trafficking in persons, and money laundering.

¶9. (SBU) The presence of U.S. Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) in Brasilia has amply demonstrated its value to our interests. However, as Brazil's global economic and political clout continues to grow, I expect that our needs in the law enforcement area will continue to rise. I am currently reviewing our law enforcement presence in Brazil, and will value your input on how we can best be equipped to effectively combat international crime, organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism in partnership with Brazil.

SHANNON